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Postal Regulatory Commission
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FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE
THE FRANCITAS, TX POST OFFICE
AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE
SERVICE BY RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

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I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is issuing the final determination to close the Francitas, TX Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the La Ward Post Office, located eight miles away. Service will be provided to cluster box units (CBUs).

CBUs are secure free-standing units of individually locked mail compartments installed and maintained by the Postal Service at no cost to the customer. A parcel locker may also be installed.

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster was promoted on July 19, 2008. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office. Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The office was studied for possible closing or consolidation due to the following reasons: This office is currently vacant and earns less than 2.0 hours daily thus performing below standards to operate as an independent Post Office. Effective and regular service will continue via rural route service with retail services provided by the carrier alleviating the need to travel to a Post office for service.

The Francitas Post Office, an 2 Hour Office, provides service from 08:00 to 10:00 Monday - Friday , 08:00 to 10:00 Saturday and lobby hours of 0800 to 1500 on Monday - Friday and 0800 to 1000 on Saturday to 66 post office box or general delivery customers and no delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail.

The retail window averaged four transaction(s) accounting for five minute(s) of retail workload daily. With minimal workload, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will be provided by rural route service. Office receipts for the last 3 years were: \$4,105 (11 revenue units) in FY 2010; \$2,812 (7 revenue units) in FY 2011; and \$2,734 (7 revenue units) in FY 2012. There were no permit mailer(s) or postage meter customer(s).

On March 15, 2011, representatives from the Postal Service were available at to answer questions and provide information to customers. 45 customer(s) attended the meeting.

On March 01, 2011, 66 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Francitas Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at the Francitas Post Office. 43 questionnaires were returned. Responses regarding the proposed alternate service were as follows: 0 favorable, 17 unfavorable, and 24 expressed no opinion.

A petition supporting the retention of the Francitas Post Office was received on March 23, 2011, with 102 signatures.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the La Ward Post Office, an EAS-11 level office. Window service hours at the La Ward Post Office are from 7:45 to 15:45, Monday through Friday, and CLOSED on Saturday. There are 100 post office boxes available.

The proposal to close the Francitas Post Office was posted with an invitation for comment at the Francitas Post Office and La Ward Post Office from April 20, 2011 to June 21, 2011. The following additional concerns were received during the proposal posting period:

1. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox
Response: The customer also expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox. A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the suspended Post Office area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.
2. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern about misdelivered mail
Response: The customer expressed a concern about misdelivered mail. The concern about misdelivery has been brought to the attention of the administrative postmaster. The Postal Service regrets any inconvenience that customers have experienced because of misdelivery. We consider misdelivered mail a very serious problem and appreciate when customers report this to us since it provides an opportunity to take corrective action.
3. **Concern:** Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity
Response: The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the

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Response:

The customer expressed a concern about the loss of the Communities' identity. A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity by continuing the use of the suspended Post Office name and ZIP Code in addresses and in the National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory.

4. Concern:

Customers expressed concern over a postal representative not being customer oriented

Response:

The customer expressed concern over a postal representative not being customer oriented. The Postal Service is very interested in the service needs of the community and customer feedback is crucial to improving service. Concerns raised by the community will be investigated by the Postal Service and appropriate actions will be taken.

5. Concern:

Customers expressed concern over the dependability of rural route service

Response:

The customer expressed a concern over the dependability of rural route service. Rural letter carriers perform a vital function in the United States Postal Service serving thousands of families and businesses in rural and suburban areas while traveling millions of miles daily. Rural letter carriers are highly respected by the American public. This respect has been earned by many years of dedication to the Postal Service and to postal customers. During national and local emergencies, including prolonged periods of extreme weather conditions, rural carriers have demonstrated great responsibility in providing mail service to postal customers. Rural carriers are required to serve the route expeditiously and arrive at boxes at about the same time each day.

6. Concern:

Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance

Response:

The customer questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Carrier service is more cost-effective than maintaining a postal facility and postmaster position. The Postal Service estimates an positive annual savings.

7. Concern:

Customers were concerned about mail security

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about the security of mail. Customers may place a lock on their mailboxes. The mailbox must have a slot large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. The Postal Service does not open mailboxes which are locked and does not accept keys for this purpose.

8. Concern:

Customers were concerned about senior citizens

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about senior citizens. Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the administrative postmaster for more information.

9. Concern:

You were concerned about having to travel to another post office for service

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about having to travel to another post office for service. Services provided at the post office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another post office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience.

10. Concern:

Can Post Office consumer Affairs address be at PO?

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Response:

You inquired as the whether or not the Consumer Affairs address be posted at the Post Office. Yes. Their address is Consumer Affairs 1 Post Office Drive San Antonio TX 78284

11. Concern:

Customer expressed a concern about the length of time it took to forward your mail

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about the length of time it took to forward your mail. You may pick up address change notice post cards at the post office that can be mailed to your correspondents listing your correct new mailing address. As your correspondents use your correct mailing address there will no longer be a requirement that your mail goes through our forwarding system.

12. Concern:

Customers expressed concern over the apparent lack of interest by the Postal Service for the needs of the community

Response:

The customer expressed a concern that the Postal Service exhibits a lack of interest in the mailing needs of the community. The Postal Service is required to provide each community with regular and effective service, using the most cost efficient means possible. The proposed alternate delivery service will meet the mailing and service needs of the community in a more cost effective manner.

13. Concern:

Customers inquired about mailbox installation and maintenance

Response:

The customer expressed a concern about mailbox installation and maintenance. Customers are responsible for mailbox installation and maintenance. Mailboxes must be placed so that they may be safely and conveniently served by the carrier and must be located on the right-hand side of the road in the direction of the carrier's travel. Mailbox supports should conform to state laws and highway regulations. The Postal Service recommends that customers contact the administrative postmaster or carrier for advice on placement of mailboxes and mailbox height and supports.

14. Concern:

Does amount of junk mail help or hurt PO?

Response:

The customer inquired about junk mail or bulk business mail and does this mail help the Postal Service. Bulk Business Mail definately helps the Postal Service in generating revenue.

15. Concern:

Does buying on line give credit to Francitas?

Response:

You inquired if buying on line gives revenue credit to Francitas. Yes as long as you use the zip code for Francitas in the return address.

16. Concern:

Francitas Post Office does not have stamps available that I need like postcard stamps, and rolls of stamps.

Response:

The customer expressed a concern as to why the Francistas Post Office does not have post card stamps and rolls of stamps. There is no reason for this and the MPOO has instructed the OIC to have the necessary stamps that the customers are requesting.

17. Concern:

How much money do unions pay to PACS?

Response:

You inquired as to the amount of money that the unions pay to PACS. This information is not available to the Postal Service.

18. Concern:

How would curb delivery to house be cost effective?

Response:

You inquired as to how curb delivery to the house would be cost effective. This would be cost effective by not having to pay salary and benefits.

19. Concern:

If boxes are put at houses, then it would cost county money to mow around boxes patch roads.

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Response:

The customer expressed a concern that if the boxes are put up in front of houses that the county would have to then pay for mowing. If boxes are placed in front of your houses, then it would be the homeowner or occupant that would be responsible for mowing.

20. **Concern:**

If PO closes will we be given an option to have home delivery vs CBU's?

Response:

You expressed a concern that if the Post Office closes if you can have home delivery or receive mail on the route. Yes you can decide whether to get mail on the route or in the CBU'S.

21. **Concern:**

Need laws changed in congress to help PO, like prefunding retiree benefits.

Response:

You expressed a concern that laws need to be changed in Congress to help the Post Office. Bills are being introduced in Congress now to address this.

22. **Concern:**

What about franking priviledges for Congress? Would that save money?

Response:

You expressed a concern about Congress paying for franking priviledges and yes they do pay for these priviledges.

23. **Concern:**

What is a substantial amount of time for the study?

Response:

The customer inquired about building a new facility or a mobile unit. New construction or the placement of a mobile unit or trailer is not feasible when regular and effective service can be provided by more cost-effective alternatives, such as rural delivery.

24. **Concern:**

What kind of warning will we get if we close?

Response:

You expressed a concern as to what type of warning that the community will receive about the closing of your office. A proposal will be posted for 2 months and then decision will come from Headquarters.

25. **Concern:**

Whose decision was it to take the copier out?

Response:

You expressed a concern as to why the copiers were taken out of the Post Office. The copiers were rented and based on useage the supplier decided to remove the copiers.

26. **Concern:**

Why doesn't PO get Government Bailout money?

Response:

The customer expressed a concern as to why the Postal Service doesn't get Govrnment Bailout money. The Postmaster General has testified to congress explaining our financial situation and requesting that the laws be changed.

27. **Concern:**

Why is it our fault if the PO does not stock items that we need?

Response:

The customer expressed a concern as to why the Francistas Post Office does not have post card stamps and rolls of stamps. There is no reason for this and the MPOO has instructed the OIC to have the necessary stamps that the customers are requesting.

28. **Concern:**

Will emails address provided be used to communicate information?

Response:

You inquired if emails would be used to communicate information. The answer is no. Notices will be placed in your box and at the Post Office.

29. **Concern:**

Would mail go to LaWard or Blessing if PO closed?

Response:

You expressed a concern about mail going to LaWard or Blesssing. Mail would come out of Ganado but CBU's would be placed in Francitas for mail to be delivered.

Some advantages of the proposal are:

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1. The rural and contract carriers may provide retail services, alleviating the need to go to the post office. Stamps by Mail order forms are provided for customer convenience.
2. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
3. Savings for the Postal Service contribute in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
4. CBUs can offer the security of individually locked mail compartments. Parcel lockers provide convenient parcel delivery for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will not have to pay post office box fees.
6. Saves time and energy for customers who drive to the post office to pick up mail.

Some disadvantages of the proposal are:

1. The loss of a retail outlet. Retail services may be provided by the rural or contract delivery carrier.
2. Meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier at the box to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions.
3. A change in the mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address. A carrier route address will be assigned.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY

Francitas is an unincorporated community located in JACKSON County. The community is administered politically by None. Police protection is provided by the Edna Sheriff Dept. Fire protection is provided by the Francitas Fire Dept. The community is comprised of Retirees Farmers and those who commute to work at nearby communities and may work in local businesses.

Businesses and organizations include: Francitas Church of Christ Francitas Baptist Church, Francitas Fire Dept. Residents may travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Francitas Post Office will be available at the La Ward Post Office. Government forms normally provided by the Post Office will also be available at the La Ward Post Office or by contacting your local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed from questionnaires, the community meeting, on the petition, and on the congressional inquiry:

None

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will not adversely affect the community.

III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster was promoted on July 19, 2008. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) has been posted several times but remains vacant. No other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected. Since the postmaster vacancy and the postmaster relief position is vacant.

IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$ 19,896 with a breakdown as follows:

Postmaster Salary (EAS-55, No COLA)	\$ 23,025
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$ 7,713
Annual Lease Costs	+ \$ 0
Total Annual Costs	\$ 30,738
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	- \$ 10,842
Total Annual Savings	<u>\$ 19,896</u>

A one-time expense of \$ 5746 will be incurred for the movement of this facility.

V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

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VI. SUMMARY

This is the final determination to close the Francitas, TX Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the La Ward Post Office, located eight miles away. Service will be provided to cluster box units (CBUs).

The postmaster was promoted on July 19, 2008. If the office has a noncareer PMR(s), they may be separated from the Postal Service; however, attempts will be made to reassign the employee(s) to a nearby facility. No other employee(s) will be adversely affected. The workload has declined. Effective and regular service will continue to be provided by rural route service.

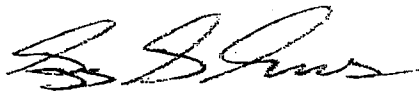
The Francitas Post Office provided delivery and retail service to 66 PO Box or general delivery customers and no delivery route customers. The daily retail window transactions averaged four. There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services may be available from a rural or contract delivery carrier, which could alleviate the need to travel to a Post Office for service. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$19,896 annually. A disadvantage to some will be in meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions with rural or contract delivery carrier.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this final determination is warranted.

VII. NOTICES

- A. Support Materials. Copies of all materials upon which this final determination is based are available for public inspection at the Francitas Post Office and La Ward Post Office during normal office hours.
- B. Appeal Rights. This final determination to close the Francitas Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Ave NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001. Appeals must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the date this final determination is posted. If an appeal is filed, copies of appeal documents prepared by the Postal Regulatory Commission or the parties to the appeal will be made available for public inspection at Francitas Post Office and La Ward Post Office during normal office hours.



Gregory Graves
(A) Vice President of Delivery and Post Office Operations

02/22/2013

Date

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Market will
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Vendors are
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(361) 771-
c forms are
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Boutique in
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nation call
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782-3552.

1 UMC, 313
Edna, will
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11 am, 1-1

Yup, it's definitely gone

Photo by Paul Harrison

Jaime Bednarz, service manager at Bradford Motors in Edna, pulls the remains of the cut pipe from the undercarriage of one of the vandalized trucks. A dozen vehicles total needed repairs after thieves cut out the catalytic converters.

Francitas Post Office will close on March 26

By Chris Lundstrom
General Manager

After more than one year of uncertainty the Francitas Post Office will close its doors for good on Tuesday, March 26.

According to Sam Bolen, United States Post Office public information officer for the Rio Grande District, the Francitas Post Office was originally slated for closure in Jan. 2012, but the postal service revamped the plan to keep the office open by cutting the hours it was open to two hours a day.

"We were unable to find anyone to work a two-hour-a-day schedule so on Feb. 22 we posted a notice that the office will be closed March 26," Bolen said.

The Francitas Post Office currently services 60 customers. Bolen said they would still receive their mail locally, but at cluster box units.

"By March 26 they should be installed," he said. "We are currently negotiating land for them to be located."

Bolen added that the cluster box units will be serviced

by a rural carrier.

"These rural carriers can sell stamps, money orders, and certified mail," he said.

"They should be there about the same time every day so customers could purchase these from them."

He mentioned that La Ward, which is 8 miles away, and Ganado, which is about 15 miles away, will still have post offices and personnel available.

For any questions or more information call Angie Malek, Ganado postmaster, at 771-2536.

Man given life sentence in Ganado RV theft

By Lisa Shapiro
Staff Writer

Everett Kelley, 48 of Woodville received a life sentence on Feb. 28 for theft by District Judge Jack W. Marr.

Kelley stole a \$60,000 RV

camper on December of 2011 from the city limits of Ganado, Rick Boone, investigator at the Jackson County Sheriff's office said. According to Boone, Kelley did not take a plea during the trial, which led to

another RV camper

the life sentence. The trial started on Feb. 13 and lasted until Feb. 28. He said Kelley has two other felony charges pending for possession of a weapon in a correctional facility and for theft of

Manager Jaime Bednarz.

Arriving at work on March 4, someone noticed parts of the exhaust pipes hanging out from underneath one of the trucks. After looking more closely, Bednarz said they realized someone had cut out sections of exhaust pipe from the converters to the Y-pipe where the pipes met.

See Thieves Page 3A

Jail inspection results positive

By Lisa Shapiro
Staff Writer

The Jackson County Jail was inspected on Feb. 21 by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards and the results were positive. The inspection was discussed at the March 11 Jackson County Commissioners' Court meeting.

County Judge Dennis Simons read aloud from a letter written by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. Simons said the TCJS acknowledged the excellent work done by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

Simons congratulated Jackson County Sheriff Andy Lunderback on having a well-kept jail.

"Thank you judge and commissioners, but it involves all of you as well," Lunderback said. "So pat yourselves on the back, too." According to the TCJS

Investigator Michael Yaws, Hunt Contractors and TxDOT in Victoria were also hit.

"At Hunt we had a dark colored pickup truck the same night, early evening about 8:30," said Yaws. "It's becoming a thing we are watching out for more."

There is only one place in

is the duty of the commission to create reasonable written rules and procedures establishing minimum standards, inspection procedures, enforcement policies and technical assistance for the construction, equipment, maintenance and operation of jail facilities under its jurisdiction; the custody, care and treatment of inmates and having programs of rehabilitation, education and recreation for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction.

A Federal Emergency Management Agency workshop is scheduled for Thursday, March 14 from 2-8 p.m. at the Jackson County Services Building, 411 N. Wells St. in Edna. Simons said residents who live near a flood zone should attend the workshop because if FEMA makes changes to the floodplain maps, it could affect